

|           |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Jones     | Murkowski | Shaheen    |
| Kaine     | Nelson    | Shelby     |
| Kennedy   | Paul      | Sullivan   |
| King      | Perdue    | Tester     |
| Lankford  | Portman   | Thune      |
| Leahy     | Reed      | Tillis     |
| Lee       | Risch     | Toomey     |
| Manchin   | Roberts   | Warner     |
| McCaskill | Rubio     | Whitehouse |
| McConnell | Sasse     | Wicker     |
| Moran     | Scott     | Young      |

## NAYS—29

|            |           |            |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Blumenthal | Harris    | Sanders    |
| Booker     | Heinrich  | Schatz     |
| Brown      | Hirono    | Schumer    |
| Cantwell   | Klobuchar | Smith      |
| Cardin     | Markey    | Stabenow   |
| Casey      | Menendez  | Udall      |
| Duckworth  | Merkley   | Van Hollen |
| Durbin     | Murphy    | Warren     |
| Feinstein  | Murray    | Wyden      |
| Gillibrand | Peters    |            |

## NOT VOTING—2

|        |        |
|--------|--------|
| McCain | Rounds |
|--------|--------|

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 69, the nays are 29.

The motion is agreed to.

## EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of A. Marvin Quattlebaum, Jr., of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon—and I know I will be joined by a number of my colleagues on the floor—to talk about gun violence and to talk about what happened most recently and tragically in the State of Florida. I hope we can cover a number of aspects of this challenge, but I wanted to start with the victims who were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14. I will make reference to the individuals more specifically a little later, but we are remembering them today. We are thinking of their families and certainly thinking as well of the surviving students.

We are praying for the families, the victims, and the survivors. I can't imagine what these families are dealing with right now just days after this tragedy. There are a lot of ways to express grief, a lot of ways to somehow articulate the loss. I can't do it adequately, so I will turn to, in this case, a songwriter, recording artist Bruce Springsteen. We all know a good bit of his music, but years ago, after 9/11, he wrote the lyrics to a song which was entitled, "You're Missing." Of course, it has application for those who have loved and lost, especially in this instance, so tragically.

Bruce Springsteen's words go, in part, like this, and the refrain of the song is "You're missing." At one point he says:

You're missing when I shut out the lights  
You're missing, when I close my eyes  
You're missing, when I see the sun rise

He is giving us a sense of the loss—all day, every day, all night, every night—for that family member. He was speaking and reflecting upon the losses of 9/11, but anyone who has lost a loved one, especially this way—in this case, victims of murder in the school—must be thinking the same about what is missing in their lives and who is missing in their life, whether it is a son, a daughter, or another loved one.

Gun violence in our country is all too common. It is almost hard to comprehend how common it has become, and unfortunately it is all too common not just for our country but especially for the younger generation. I will not provide lines of demarcation, but a lot of young people have known little else in their young lives but reading about or seeing on television stories about gun violence or being in the midst of an act of gun violence. At least hundreds of Americans have been in schools that have been the site of gun violence in the last 20 years or so.

What we ought to do here is, in addition to giving speeches and pointing out where we should go—that is helpful, I guess, but the most important thing the Senate can do is to debate and vote. It would be ideal if we would debate one bill and then vote on it, then have another debate on another bill and vote on that, and do that again and again and see where we end up. I think most people here would be willing to do that even if we knew the result, even if you could prove to us that this particular measure will not pass or this one will be close or that one might pass. Whatever the circumstance, we should debate this issue. This institution is supposed to be all about open debate on the issues of the day. That is what I think that not only young people across the country but people of all ages are expecting of us. They expect us to debate and vote and keep trying to pass a measure that might reduce or maybe even substantially reduce the likelihood of further gun violence in schools and all other kinds of places in our society.

Of course, we are thinking particularly about schools, where students should have a reasonable but sometimes cannot be sure of a reasonable expectation of security. I can't imagine this as a student. In all the years I was in school, we never even thought about this as a reality in our lives. People my age probably never thought about it for 1 minute. People who grew up in the 1960s or 1970s or 1980s never thought about this. It is only in the last generation or so that students have had to worry about and think about and unfortunately, for some, experience this kind of violence.

I was a teacher for 1 year. I was a volunteer in North Philadelphia in a fifth grade classroom. I only taught for a year and knew I would only be teaching for a year of volunteer work, but I

never thought about this. I can't imagine what I would do even if I had some training in law enforcement. Even if I had some training in how to handle a weapon, I can't imagine having to defend a classroom against this kind of killer with a high-powered weapon, where he can shoot bullets, one after another, into a classroom. I can't even imagine, and most people can't imagine.

Schools are supposed to be places of teaching, of learning, of friendship, of competition, and of engagement with all kinds of activities in a school. Of course, schools are supposed to be places of growth, where young people start high school or grade school—high school for 4 years, grade school for longer—come through that, and grow into the kind of person their families hope they will be. Schools should not be places of fear and trepidation and uncertainty about what might happen in that school. This is not a common thought that students in years past had, that they would go to school and not be safe, that they would go to school and potentially not come home.

What has been heartening and inspiring in the aftermath of this tragedy is what young people have done in Parkland in the State of Florida and, frankly, throughout the country. The other day, one of my colleagues said something that made a lot of sense. My colleague made the statement that the Senate is not where the focus of attention is. This Senator said that the focus of attention is on these young people. They are leading. In this case, Congress might have to follow, but we should follow them. They are leading on this. They are showing us the way. Young people are charting a new course on this issue, and they are not going away. They are going to be voting for 50 more years or longer. They are not going away, and this issue won't go away. They are leading us, and we should follow them. They and their families expect us to act. That means debating and voting. It doesn't just mean giving speeches or expressing condolence.

Many of us were moved and inspired by their leadership, and we continue to be so inspired. Many of us were moved to tears and outpourings of emotion on all of these tragedies. I will never forget what I was thinking and responding to when it came to the Newtown massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School. That, for me, was a seminal moment in my life in the Senate. That tragedy informed how I would vote going forward. That tragedy moved me to take a different approach to these issues and, frankly, to vote a different way.

Starting in 2012 and 2013, in the aftermath of that tragedy, the one question I had to ask myself at the time—and I think we are still asking ourselves tragedy after tragedy—is there no action Congress can take that will substantially reduce the likelihood of gun violence in a school? Is there no action

that the most powerful country in the history of the human race can take to reduce this likelihood? If our answer is no, then I guess that is the way some will vote, and they will move on to other issues. I don't think many Americans believe that. I think most Americans believe there are actions we can take. It won't be one bill or one amendment or one vote, but there are a series of steps we can take over time, and it will take too much time, but we have to start now to consider, debate, and vote on a number of measures.

I want to turn to my colleagues in just a moment.

In the time after the Sandy Hook Elementary tragedy, I was, as many of us were, reading about these young children and the horror in that classroom. I happened to tear out a newspaper page from the Wall Street Journal. These were printed in all kinds of newspapers across the country. You can't see it from a distance, but it is a yellowed copy of that page. It is from the Wall Street Journal dated December 17, 2012, page A6. The inscription above it is "Shattered Lives." It has pictures of the students and pictures of their teachers and others in the school as well. They were all victims of gun violence. I won't go through the stories, but these are powerful stories of their lives. We have to ask ourselves, in the aftermath of that kind of a tragedy—just like the most recent tragedy—are we going to celebrate their lives and tell the world how much they contributed to the life of America but then in the same breath say: But we have to move on to another issue. I don't think that is an American approach. I don't think that is the approach of a great nation, of a great people.

When we are at our best, we tackle problems. We know it will take a long time. We know it will take a number of votes and a number of actions. But we have to begin. I think we should begin.

In this instance, I am not going to go through all the names or all the names from every tragedy, of course, but let me read just the first names of the victims in Parkland. I know the senior Senator from Florida, because of his concern for these victims and their families and his knowledge of his home State, will go into even more detail. I will read the first names. As we are reading them, we should think about what we can do, what we should do as a people, or should we just do what has been done too many other times and move on?

Alyssa, Scott, Martin, Nicholas, Aaron, Jaime, Chris, Luke, Cara, Gina, Joaquin, Alaina, Meadow, Helena, Alex, Carmen, and Peter—17 individuals who are missing in the lives of their family, missing what their classmates are experiencing every day; missing from the lives of those classmates, sometimes their best friends. As the songwriter says, those 17 are missing when they shut out the lights. They are missing when they close their

eyes at night. And they are missing when they see the sunrise.

We have an obligation. We are dutybound as an institution but maybe more importantly, as a people, to take action. The time is now—maybe not to finish action, but the time is now to take action.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, as the Senator from Pennsylvania is leaving, those are the people whose names he just read. That is why I am here to tell you that teachers, students, and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School returned to school for the first time since that shooting 2 weeks ago. Some were ready. Some who returned were scared. Some didn't go back; they are going to a different school.

What happened at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School 2 weeks ago should never happen anywhere in this country, ever, ever, never again.

Look at those faces so full of promise. Here is the coach. He saved some of the kids' lives. He jumped in front of them. This is another adult who tried to save lives. Here is another adult who tried to save lives. It shouldn't happen in a school. It shouldn't happen at a nightclub, like Pulse. It shouldn't happen in an airport or a church or an outdoor concert. It shouldn't happen.

So why does it happen? Why does this keep happening over and over again? Well, I am going to tell you why. It is because of us. It is because all 100 Members of this Senate and all 435 Members down the hallway in the House of Representatives—it is our refusal to act. It is our failure to convince one another that there are some things that should be done regardless of party politics or polls or what the special interests want. They ought to be done simply because they are the right things to do.

What about a commonsense approach, like a background check every time somebody buys a gun? What about a comprehensive or universal background check that would expand if there is a restraining order? How about if there is a mental problem other than just an adjudicated mental order? How about the terrorist watch list? If you are on that list, you can't get on an airplane because you are suspected to be a terrorist. Why should they be able to buy a gun? How about if you had been on the terrorist watch list and are no longer? That would have caught the shooter in Orlando because Omar Mateen had been on the terrorist watch list and was no longer when he walked in and bought that Sig Sauer MCX and mowed down 49 people.

It is our refusal to act. It is our failure to convince one another that there are some things that should be done. If you take the commonsense approach of requiring a background check, that is the right thing to do. Banning the military-style assault rifles, that is the right thing to do.

People get confused. There is a difference between a semiautomatic rifle and an assault rifle. Ever since I was a little boy, I had a .22 semiautomatic rifle with a clip. That is not an assault weapon. Even a bullet coming from a handgun—as one of the trauma surgeons who tended to some of the victims in Broward County points out—that handgun bullet will go in and come out through a victim the same size as it went in. If it goes through an organ such as the liver, they can save that person. That is in contrast to an assault rifle weapon—a bullet that has three times the speed of a handgun bullet and that has three times the energy when it hits the victim. So if it goes into an organ such as the liver, it doesn't go through like a handgun bullet. It pulverizes the liver, and when it comes out on the other side of the body, it is as big as an orange. That is what an assault rifle is. Listen to the trauma surgeons. They will tell you.

We could take up commonsense legislation right now and enact these simple, commonsense measures to make our communities safer and help prevent another mass tragedy, but unfortunately I think it is going to be very difficult. For weeks now, even in the face of parents, students, and teachers across this country calling for action, we have done nothing. We have seen an entire community turn its grief and its outrage into a massive call for change, and we have done nothing.

Across this country we have seen gun owners destroy their own assault weapons. We have seen major corporations distance themselves from groups like the NRA and their discounts. Just today, we heard announced that private companies such as Dick's Sporting Goods are taking it upon themselves to stop selling these weapons of war. They are not going to sell AR-15s anymore. They are not going to do it because they were told to, because Congress passed a law, but because it was the right thing to do.

So if Congress fails to act now, when will we act? If these brave, young students who lost their fellow students and faculty aren't enough to break through the gridlock in Congress, what is it going to take? If this tragedy doesn't spur us to action, lead us to change, what will? When will enough finally be enough?

I say to my colleagues, the time to act is now. Let's not let what happened at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High fade into memory like so many other tragedies. Let's take this tragedy and make it a pivotal moment in our Nation's history. Let's not have to go through these massacres again. Let's let this be the last one.

Let's come together as a Senate and do what needs to be done. Let's do what so many before us have been unable to do—let's take action. Let's let this massacre be the last massacre.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I appreciate the senior Senator from Florida, and the grief he represents through his State, coming to the floor and speaking about the lives which were lost and the clarion call for us to act.

I come to the floor today because 2 weeks ago, once again, a weapon of mass murder was used to commit mass murder in an American school, and, once again, our hearts are heavy with a grief that has become too routine.

Once again, the gun lobbyists say we are powerless to do anything about it, but this time it feels different. That is because the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School have started a movement to turn “once again” into “never again.”

Unfortunately, too many of my colleagues act as if mass shootings are inevitable, when, in reality, they are preventable. The American people are sick and tired of it. That is why they have been so inspired by these students from Parkland.

I saw it with my own eyes last Sunday. A few of these Marjory Stoneman Douglas survivors came to visit New Jersey, and my constituents came out in droves to support them. Together with the Jewish Federation of Greater MetroWest and Moms Demand Action, we rallied well over 2,000 people in support of their “Never Again” movement.

What is remarkably refreshing about these students is, they are not yet jaded by the ways of Washington. They have spent their lives practicing active shooter drills. They have grown up being told that mass shootings are just a fact of life, but they know they deserve better.

After being thrust into a tragedy, they have turned their mourning into a movement. By speaking out, the students of Parkland have pricked the conscience of this country, and the American people are answering their call to action.

We see it at rallies across the country calling for tougher, smarter, commonsense gun safety laws. We see it in students across America organizing the March for Our Lives, and we see it in corporate America.

Companies such as United Airlines have already parted ways with the NRA. Retailers such as Dick’s Sporting Goods have announced they will take AR-15s off their shelves and stop selling guns to teenagers.

As Americans take action, the question is whether Congress will do the same. Far too many of my colleagues still fear a backlash from the NRA. That is why, after Las Vegas, they refused to ban the bump stocks that make mass shootings more deadly. That is why, after Sandy Hook, they refused to pass tougher background checks. That is why, after Orlando, they refused to even consider my own bill to ban the sale of high-capacity magazines. High-capacity magazines are designed for one thing and one thing only—high-capacity killing. They are the grim hallmark of mass

shootings in America, linking Parkland to Newtown, and Las Vegas to San Bernardino, and Aurora to Orlando.

Certainly, I have been encouraged to hear some of my colleagues say they may consider supporting limits on magazine sizes now. I have a legislation here I introduced months ago to do just that. The Keep America Safe Act is narrowly focused. It doesn’t infringe on anyone’s right to bear arms. I challenge all of my colleagues to sign on. However, in my view, we must do more than ban high-capacity magazines.

I, for one, voted for the assault weapons ban of 1994, when I was in the House of Representatives, and I am a cosponsor of the bill to reinstate it today. These weapons have no place in civilian society. They are not designed for self-defense. They are modeled after weapons our soldiers use on the battlefield, but if we are going to get anywhere, we must stop letting the NRA set the agenda in Washington.

It is amazing to me that some of my colleagues are effectively holding gun safety legislation hostage until they can pass their NRA-backed concealed carry bill.

I spent a lot of time hearing from my colleagues, particularly on the other side of the aisle, talk about State rights—State rights. Well, apparently, New Jersey’s right to enforce our own gun laws doesn’t count when it comes to State rights.

Our State has some of the toughest gun laws in the country, and it is no coincidence that we have the sixth lowest rate of gun deaths in the Nation. We want to keep it that way, but this bill, hot off the NRA’s wish list, would let concealed carry permit holders from States with looser standards bring their weapons to New Jersey.

At the end of the day, the NRA has 5 or 6 million members. We are a nation of 320-plus million people. While millions of responsible gun owners believe in the Second Amendment, poll after poll tells us they also believe in universal background checks and commonsense gun laws.

It is time we call out those who spout the same old NRA talking points, such as “Guns don’t kill people, people kill people.” Well, that is why we don’t run background checks on guns; we run them on people.

The NRA would have us believe that all we need to do is to have comprehensive background checks, when in reality what we need are universal background checks. This means requiring background checks for all private sales, transfers, and online sales on the internet. Why should you be able to buy, with a click of the mouse, a significant weapon without ever going through a background check?

Likewise, they say it is time for teachers to be armed and our schools to be “hardened.” Well, I haven’t met many teachers who want to be charged with assessing threats and taking lives in front of their own students. Let’s be

serious. Arming teachers wouldn’t stop the next Las Vegas. Only we can do that by passing sensible and reasonable gun safety measures that limit the sale of deadly weapons and keeping guns out of the wrong hands.

After running for their lives on February 14, the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas will march for their lives on March 24. It is inspiring to see that despite all the dysfunction in Washington, young Americans still believe in their power to make change.

How tragic would it be if we in Congress proved them wrong and, once again, let business as usual in Washington prevent us from taking action to save lives? For my part, that is not going to happen.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks of my senior Senator from New Jersey. His passion and his commitment to this issue, not just after this mass shooting, has been consistent in fighting for commonsense gun safety for years, and I am grateful for his leadership as my senior Senator.

It has now been 2 weeks since a gunman took the lives of 17 children, teachers, and school administrators in Parkland, FL. In the days and weeks since, we have seen young people from that community lead a movement for change that is growing in our country, standing up to special interests, standing up to the small minority of folks who seem to want to let the status quo continue, standing up to the NRA and the gun industry and making clear the fierce urgency of now, of this moment, of this day. These young people are showing what true courage is. They are showing it at a time of great grief, of great pain in their lives.

I know what they are fighting for. It is not a fringe issue. I know what they are fighting for. It is not representative of some small minority; they are fighting for the majority of Americans who agree with them, the majority of Americans who want commonsense gun safety in America. Those folks who own guns and those who don’t want background checks for all gun buyers, including those between private dealers and gun shows.

The majority of Americans don’t want people who are suspected terrorists to be able to go to a gun show and go to a private seller and drive off with a trunkful of weapons. The majority of Americans know that we should be keeping people with a history of domestic violence from getting their hands on a gun. The majority of Americans want to choke the pipeline of illegal guns that are flooding American communities from sea to shining sea, from the Great Lakes to the gulf coast.

The overwhelming majority of Americans know that we can do more to prevent gun violence. Sure, we can’t stop everyone, but we can do things that will reduce the violence, reduce the

number of deaths, and save lives. These are commonsense things that the majority of Americans—gun owners, non-gun owners, Republicans and Democrats—a majority of Americans support these policies that are proven.

For example, we know it is true that in States like Connecticut, when they instituted commonsense background checks, they saw firearm homicides drop by 40 percent. And we know that States that implement laws blocking perpetrators of domestic violence from getting guns see a significant reduction—upward of 10 percent—in homicides by people's intimate partners.

We know that between 2009 and 2013, States that have required background checks on handguns saw 35 percent fewer gun deaths per capita than States that didn't.

This is fact. We know that commonsense gun safety, supported by over 80 percent of gun owners and over 90 percent of Americans, will save lives.

Dr. King once said—and I am paraphrasing here—that morality can't be legislated, but behavior can be regulated; that the law can't make someone love me, but it stop them from lynching me; that the law can't change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless.

We know we have the power to make the change.

This is no panacea. These ideas will not solve all of the problems, but they can make a difference, and they can save lives.

The time to act is right now. To not act is to be complicit in the continued levels of violence in our communities.

Every day that passes with no action—every single day we see, on average, 96 Americans in this country killed by a gun, including children. Every day that we do not act in this body, dozens and dozens of our American fellow citizens are dying due to gun violence, much of it preventable. Too many families in this country, too many fellow Americans know the pain and the grief and the agony of what we see in the faces of the children from Parkland.

Gun violence isn't just manifested in uniquely horrifying mass shootings in our schools and in our churches and in our movie theaters; it is a pervasive, everyday public health epidemic. It is an everyday reality for Americans across the country. It is an everyday reality for women in America. Fifty women every single month are shot to death by intimate partners in this country, making the United States the most dangerous country in the developed world when it comes to gun violence against women. We know that over half of all women killed by an intimate partner are killed with a gun. We know that when a gun is involved in a situation of domestic violence, a woman is five times more likely to be killed. We can do something to lower this kind of carnage.

Gun violence is an everyday reality for children and for young people in this country. On an average day in

America, 7 children and teens will be killed with a gun, and 40 more children will be shot and survive, often being crippled or severely wounded, often costing American taxpayers millions of dollars for their healthcare. We can lower this rate of carnage.

Gun violence is an everyday reality for people living in cities, like where I live. In the last year there was a shooting on my block. We know that for Black Americans living in a city or urban area in this country, they are almost 500 times more likely to be killed by gun violence than they are by terrorism. This is an urgent problem. It is an everyday problem. This is pressing on us every single day to act, and every day that we don't, our inaction will cost lives.

Since the tragedy in Parkland, in New Jersey alone we have seen children, young people, the elderly, women, Black and White Americans killed by gun violence. I have a stack of examples of this right here—news reports of the violence in my State.

One week ago, it was a 10-year-old boy. Yovanni Banos-Merino was killed with a gun, and his mother was wounded in Asbury Park, NJ.

The day before that, on February 20, an elderly man killed his wife—domestic violence. He killed her with a gun and then took his own life, a suicide.

Just 6 days ago, a teenager in my city of Newark, NJ, Ishmail Anthony, was killed with a gun.

Every single day we do not act, dozens and dozens of Americans are killed.

Look at this chart. We can't even read the font. Look at these American citizens—young people, old people, Black people, White people, men, women, Republicans, Democrats.

Look at this chart. We know that right now, in the past 2 weeks since the tragedy, according to the Gun Violence Archive, which compiled this list from news reports, 477 Americans have been killed with a gun—in the past 2 weeks alone, 477 American citizens.

This government was formed with a purpose. It says clearly in our founding documents “for the common defence.” In 2 weeks, there were 477 people who we did not defend—477 people whom we could have done more to save. Again, 477 people, 2 weeks since Parkland, and we have a nation that speaks to the purpose of ensuring life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. They lost their lives.

We may not have the power to stop all gun violence, but gun owners and non-gun owners, Republicans and Democrats, and our Nation as a whole agree, with a chorus of consent, that we should do things like commonsense background checks. Our inaction, our unwillingness to do the will of the people is costly, not just to the integrity of this body, but it is costly in the most grievous of ways every day. Every day, dozens die; in 2 weeks, 477.

We must do better. We can do better. With the help of God almighty, we will.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I wish to thank my colleagues for their words on this difficult, challenging topic.

On this day 2 weeks ago, the Parkland, FL, community “took 17 bullets to the heart” as Cameron, a junior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, so devastatingly put it.

Over the past years, the epidemic of gun violence has touched every aspect of American life, from schools and churches to concerts and night clubs and movie theaters, in homes and in the workplace. After each of these tragedies, we say enough is enough, yet time and again Congress fails to take action, and the discussion fades until this deadly cycle once again repeats itself. But we cannot allow this vicious cycle to continue.

Like many Americans, I have been inspired and touched by the bravery of the students of Stoneman Douglas and by their determination to create from this tragedy a legacy of positive change. They are looking to us to help ensure that they are the last students who suffer through a mass shooting. They will hold us accountable, as they should.

I have been inspired by students like Sam, who said that he doesn't feel safe in his own country and powerfully asked at the White House: “How did we not stop this after Columbine? After Sandy Hook?”

And Emma, who has been calling out elected officials for the excuses they make for putting the priorities of the gun lobby ahead of the safety and well-being of their constituents. Emma and her classmates rightly have called these excuses BS.

We must actually listen to these students, and we must act to protect them and all of our children.

People across New Hampshire own guns for hunting, sport, and protection. New Hampshire has a long tradition of responsible gun ownership that I respect and that I am committed to upholding. But I also know that the people in New Hampshire do not want dangerous weapons in the wrong hands. It is our job to keep our citizens safe, and we owe it to the students and survivors who are speaking out, to those whom we have lost to tragic violence, and to their families and loved ones to come together and make our communities safer.

The level of gun violence in America is a public health crisis that is unique to our Nation, and like all public health challenges, there are actions we can take to mitigate harm and save lives. We can put in place responsible, commonsense policies that will do just that.

To start, we know that the shooter in Parkland displayed warning signs that, if properly heeded and addressed, may have prevented the incident, the massacre. But when law enforcement was called because of these warning signs,

it is not clear that they had tools that would have allowed them to confiscate the shooter's weapons. So one of the things we must do is ensure that every State has what are known as red flag laws—laws which allow courts to issue time-limited restraining orders to restrict access to firearms when there is evidence that an individual is planning to harm themselves or others.

It is also long past time that we improve our background check system to close loopholes and ensure that people who are already legally barred from owning guns cannot easily access them—a step that we know is supported by the vast majority of Americans.

Studies have shown the correlation between gun violence and people with a history of domestic violence. We must close loopholes that enable domestic abusers to access guns.

Additionally, for too long, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been barred from conducting public health research on gun violence. We must change that.

Finally, from banning the use of bump stocks to raising the purchasing age of semiautomatic weapons to 21, we must look at responsible steps to reduce access to deadly weapons of war that fire at high rates and inflict massive harm.

No one gun safety measure is perfect, and no gun safety measure will stop every act of gun violence, but that should not stop us from taking action. After all, we take public health measures all the time that don't prevent all diseases but vastly reduce the incidence of them.

In a country with a government of, by, and for the people, it is simply an outrage to suggest that there is nothing the people who govern themselves can do to ensure that their gun safety laws evolve as firearm technology creates weapons of increasing lethality. I also refuse to accept the notion that we cannot pass any law to address gun safety because it is too hard or the challenges are too insurmountable. That has not stopped our Nation before, and it shouldn't now.

Students in Parkland and young people across the country are speaking out and making clear that they don't want to live this way. They don't want the horror that they experienced to be inflicted on more of their peers. These young voices are speaking up and sparking a conversation that has been absent or has been pushed to the wayside for far too long. It is up to us to meet them in this moment.

The purpose of self-government is to make sure that we all do, in fact, feel safe and valued and that we each have a chance to build a life for ourselves. Let's take action to give all of our citizens those opportunities and keep our people safe from senseless acts of gun violence.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, like all great cities, Chicago is a city of neighborhoods, and one of its most storied neighborhoods is an enclave on the South Side. It is called Bronzeville. Bronzeville was born a century ago, during the first wave of the Great Migration, when tens of thousands of African Americans left the oppression of Jim Crow laws and lynching in the Deep South and headed north, to Chicago, in search of industrial jobs. By 1920, Bronzeville was home to so many African-American-owned businesses that it took on a prestigious new moniker: "Black Metropolis."

Among the famous African Americans who called Bronzeville home were Ida B. Wells, journalist, civil rights activist, and cofounder of the NAACP; Bessie Coleman, the first African-American woman pilot; and Rube Foster, founder of the Negro National Baseball League, the league that gave America such greats as Josh Gibson, Cool Papa Bell, and the legendary Satchel Paige.

Black History Month, which America celebrates each February, also has its roots in Bronzeville. It began as a modest proposal, but it seemed revolutionary at the time. In 1926, the distinguished historian and journalist Carter G. Woodson launched America's first Negro History Week.

Carter Woodson, the "father of Black history," had earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Chicago in 1908. He had gone on to become only the second African American ever—after W.E.B. DuBois—to earn a doctorate from Harvard University. Years of studying history convinced Carter Woodson that the contributions of African Americans were, in his words, "overlooked, ignored, and even suppressed by the writers of history textbooks and the teachers who use them." The result, he believed, was an incomplete and inaccurate account of history that perpetuated racial inequality and stunted the dreams of many African Americans. So Carter Woodson made it his life's mission to fill in the missing chapters in America's history books. He returned to Chicago often, almost always staying in Bronzeville at the Wabash YMCA, the first African-American Y in the United States.

In 1915 in Chicago, he and four other African-American historians founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, later renamed the "Association for the Study of African American Life and History." In 1916,

the association began publishing *The Journal of Negro History*, "particularly targeted those responsible for the education of black children."

Woodson chose the second week in February to mark Negro History Week—to commemorate the birthdays of the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass and the "Great Emancipator" Abraham Lincoln.

In the 1970s, Negro History Week became Black History Month.

As we near the end of this year's Black History Month, I want to tell you about an amazing woman from the Chicago area who is making history today by helping to free women and children from modern-day slavery. Her name is Marian Hatcher, and she follows in the footsteps of two earlier "she-ros" of American history: Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman.

Sojourner Truth was born in upstate New York in 1797, three decades before that State abolished slavery. She was separated from her family at 9, and she was bought and sold four times before escaping to freedom with her infant daughter in 1826.

She began her life as a free woman working first as an itinerant preacher. She later became an outspoken advocate for abolition, civil rights, and women's rights. When the Civil War broke out, Sojourner Truth urged young men to join the Union cause and organized supplies for Black troops. For her efforts, she was invited to meet President Lincoln in the White House in 1864.

After the war, Sojourner Truth moved to Washington, DC to work with the Freedmen's Bureau, helping freed slaves find jobs and build new lives. In the mid-1860s—90 years before the Montgomery bus boycott—a Washington streetcar conductor tried violently to block her from riding his car. Sojourner Truth insisted that he be arrested and tried.

Harriet Tubman was born in Maryland to enslaved parents around 1820—the youngest of nine children. She escaped to freedom in the North in 1949 and became one of the most famous and fearless "conductors" on the Underground Railroad. She risked her life repeatedly to return to the South and lead hundreds of slaves, including her own parents, to freedom.

Harriet Tubman risked her life again during the Civil War to work as a Union Army cook and nurse—and later as an armed scout and spy. Many called her Moses for her fierce courage in leading others out of bondage.

Marian Hatcher is a sort of modern-day Moses. Like Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, she knows the pain and despair that comes from being bought and sold like a commodity. For 2 years, she was trafficked for sex by a violent pimp. And like Sojourner Truth and Harriet Tubman, Marian Hatcher escaped her bondage, and she has dedicated her life to helping other trafficked persons regain their freedom and dignity.